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Subject: Report from the Croatian Presidency on the main achievements at EU level  
in the field of civil protection

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Delegations will find attached a Presidency Report on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection.

COREPER is invited to take note of the report.

**Report from the Croatian Presidency  
on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection**

This report outlines the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection during the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The first half of 2020 was entirely marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, which triggered a number of measures, including further implementation of the rescEU reserve under the revised Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Decision, a new legislative proposal to amend the UCPM, as well as the revision and re-activation of the Emergency Support Regulation<sup>1</sup>.

Intensive work continued despite the fact that a number of meetings, planned by the Presidency and by the Commission both in Brussels and in Zagreb, had to be cancelled due to the exceptional circumstances.

The Presidency also focused on investments in disaster risk management, with an expert workshop held in Zagreb at the end of January.

The informal meeting of Directors-General for civil protection, initially planned in Zagreb, was held on 9 June as a virtual meeting.

Finally, the UCPM activations reached an unprecedented number in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak, in particular to support successful repatriation operations of over 75.000 EU citizens stranded in third countries following the closure of borders and suspension of transport possibilities. The UCPM was also activated a number of times in response to other natural and man-made disasters around the globe.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EU) 2020/521 of 14 April 2020 activating the emergency support under Regulation (EU) 2016/369 and amending its provisions taking into account the COVID-19 outbreak, OJ L 117 of 15.4.2020, p. 3.

## 1. Implementation of the revised Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Work continued on the implementation of the revised UCPM Decision of March 2019.

### a) Further operationalisation of rescEU

Article 12 of the UCPM Decision provides for a possibility to establish rescEU capacities.

In the context of the EU response to COVID-19 and in particular to tackle the lack of personal protective equipment across the EU, on 19 March 2020 the Commission adopted a UCPM **implementing decision regarding medical stockpiling rescEU capacities**<sup>2</sup>.

The rescEU reserve consists of "*stockpiling of medical countermeasures and/or personal protective equipment aimed at combatting serious cross-border threats to health*"<sup>3</sup>.

This can cover: vaccines, therapeutics, intensive care medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and laboratory supplies. Host Member or Participating States should also provide:

- appropriate storage facilities in the Union and adequate stockpiling monitoring system;
- appropriate procedures ensuring the adequate packaging, transport and delivery of the products referred to under capacities, where needed;
- appropriately trained personnel to handle, and administer the products referred to under capacities.

So far, 370,000 masks from the rescEU medical stockpile hosted by Romania and Germany have been delivered to Italy, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Germany replenished their rescEU stockpile with 363,500 FFP2 masks on 28 May. A decision is pending on consignees for allocation. Decisions on future allocation of rescEU capacities among the EU Member States, the UK in the transition period and the UCPM Participating States will be taken in accordance with criteria laid down in the Implementing Decision and will be supported by the ECDC's methodology.

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<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 202/414 of 19 March 2020 amending Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/570 as regards medical stockpiling rescEU capacities, OJ L 82 of 19.3.2020, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> As referred to in Decision No 1082/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on cross-border threats to health.

On 26 March another **implementing decision** was adopted by the Commission on **capacities established to respond to low probability risks with a high impact**<sup>4</sup>, providing for full financing from the EU budget of setting up and deployment of such capacities, including the medical stockpiling.

In parallel, the Commission and Member States continued to work on the priority areas identified by the UCPM legislation for the development of other rescEU capacities, with priority to ensure sufficient **aerial forest fire fighting capacities** for the upcoming forest fire season. The Aerial Forest Fighting rescEU fleet (including both “rescEU transition” and “rescEU proper”) for 2020 will, pending the signing of all grants, consist of: 4 Air-tractor, 8 Canadair, 6 helicopters and 1 Dash.

Work has also advanced on **medical capacities**:

- Norway and Germany have expressed their interest to build a Medevac capacity for highly infectious diseases patients;
- Italy, Sweden and Romania have expressed their interest for developing a Medevac capacity for disaster victims;
- Eight Member States so far have expressed their interest in developing an EMT-3 capacity.

The development of **CBRN capacities** is still in an early-stage with a possible implementing act defining the exact types of capacities and their quality requirements still to be adopted.

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<sup>4</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 202/452 of 26 March 2020 amending Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/570 as regards capacities established to respond to low probability risks with a high impact, OJ L 94 of 27.3.2020, p. 1.

## b) Reinforced UCPM budget

On 17 April 2020 the budgetary authority approved a reinforced UCPM budget<sup>5</sup>, allocating an additional EUR 45 million to the UCPM response budget and EUR 370 million for preparedness measures, including to build the rescEU medical stockpiling.

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<sup>5</sup> Amending budget No 1 of the European Union for the financial year 2020, OJ L 126 of 21.4.2020, p. 1; Amending budget No 2 of the European Union for the financial year 2020, OJ L 126 of 21.4.2020, p. 67.

## 2. **Proposals for a Decision amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism**

Two proposals have been tabled to amend the UCPM Decision.

### a) **Proposal of 2 June 2020**

Discussions have started in PROCIV on the new legislative proposal of 2 June to amend the UCPM Decision<sup>6</sup>, which is based on the following key elements:

- To reinforce preparedness and prevention of the Member States in response to an emergency with transboundary impact, the Commission proposes to develop disaster resilience goals. These would be based on forward-looking scenarios, data on past events and cross-sectorial impact analysis;
- The rescEU strategic reserve could be reinforced with additional capacities directly procured by the Commission, fully financed from the EU budget and strategically pre-positioned. RescEU capacities acquired by the Member States would also be fully financed from the EU budget. RescEU could be deployed outside the EU without the current limitation to disasters "which could significantly affect Member States or their citizens";
- Pre-positioning of strategic capacities inside the EU, but possibly also outside the EU, to ensure effective geographic coverage, with associated logistical, warehousing and transport capacity;

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<sup>6</sup> 8330/20; COM(2020) 0097.

- Strengthened operational role for the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), also reinforcing its links with other crisis management entities in Member States and at EU level and strengthening its monitoring and early warning functions;
- Additional financial flexibility to adapt to disaster needs;
- More detailed obligations for the Member States to provide Union visibility and branding (use of the Union emblem) and proactively communicate via national channels.

**b) Proposal of 7 March 2019**

The current MFF-related proposal to amend the UCPM<sup>7</sup> and the related Council partial general approach of 19 November 2019<sup>8</sup>, is based on the following principles:

- Ensuring flexibility in the management of EU funding for actions under the UCPM, by deleting Annex I laying down percentages for adaptation for allocation of the financial envelope, as proposed by the Commission;
- Ensuring a predictable allocation of funds by expanding the possibility of using multi-annual work programmes and split budgetary commitments for the whole of Article 21 (prevention/preparedness actions);
- Further reinforcement of the European Civil Protection Pool by allowing for EU co-financing of the operational costs of committed capacities when deployed outside the EU (Article 23);
- Reinforcing the transparency and predictability of budgetary execution and projected future allocations (Article 25)
- Allowing Member States to make use of the Galileo emergency service in order to warn the population in particular areas about natural disasters or other emergencies (Article 9).

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<sup>7</sup> Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (7271/19, COM(2019) 125 final, 7 March 2019).

<sup>8</sup> 13792/19.

### 3. Investments in disaster risk management

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is an interdisciplinary area which calls for a multi-sectoral approach to enhance the resilience of the community as a whole. In a broader context, investing in DRR means investing in the safety and sustainability of Member States (MS) and of the EU as a whole, which in turn helps ensure prosperity and stability. To invest in a MS's DRR contributes to strengthening that MS's society and economy. The effect this has on neighbouring and partner countries is not to be neglected.

From the start of the mandate, the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU has encouraged MS to discuss possible sources of financing, gaps they have in determining the most effective DRR strategies/investments and to share the most effective examples of coordination mechanisms for DRR projects and activities at the national level.

There are challenges in mainstreaming disaster risk management into national policies, managing disaster risks, and multi-sectoral inclusiveness in the investments planning as well as in determining sources for structured and systematic disaster risk management (DRM) investments.

The workshop held in Zagreb on 29 and 30 January addressed these challenges by:

- presenting possible funding sources for DRM investments;
- putting forward good practices in advocating for and preparing DRR investments;
- reviewing experiences in managing budgets in a multi-sectoral environment;
- giving participants an opportunity to shortly present their project ideas in an informal environment and get advise on the right funding source.



The Croatian Presidency used a questionnaire to survey MS on the following issues:

1. What are the current practices in the MS to assess the most cost-effective DRR intervention?  
How are they planned and financed?
2. What are the existing coordination mechanisms and communication in the MS regarding DRR financing?
3. What are the funding sources for these and other activities?
4. What constitutes the basis in the strategic documents for the activities in this area?

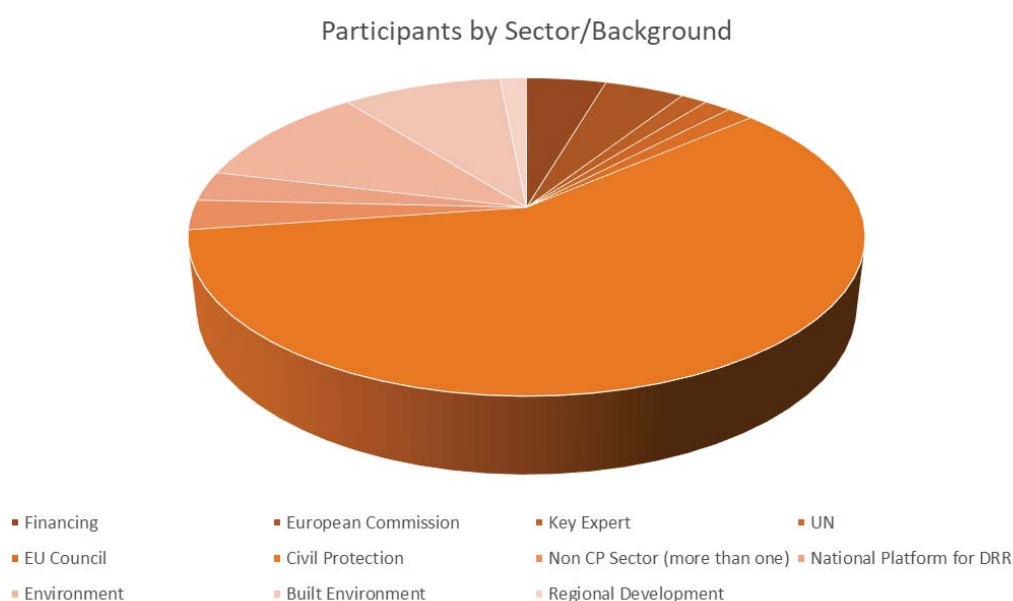
The questionnaire gave the following results:

- There are different understandings of Disaster Risk Management.
- An increasingly multi-sectorial approach in the MS.
- A number of countries still do not have a strategic DRM document.
- National/Regional/Local Budget is still a dominant source of funding.
- There is lack of dedicated DRM funds in the MS.
- There is lack of DRM coordination mechanism/tools in the MS.
- There is low Risk Transfer and Cost/Benefit awareness among the questionnaire participants.
- Good private-public partnership/projects were identified in the answers.
- Overall a positive shift toward risk management is visible among the MS.

The Croatian Presidency provided a forum for discussion with MS and exchange of good practices in financing disaster risk reduction while achieving effective and efficient results during the Workshop.

Besides focusing on civil protection as a coordinator and advocate of DRM on the national level, the workshop aimed to focus on three specific sectors: 1) built environment; 2) spatial planning; and 3) environment, those were the sectors represented at the workshop.

More than 70 participants from EU MS, participating states and candidate countries from different sectors participated in the Workshop:



The Presidency has also invited representatives of the European Commission (DG ECHO, DG REGIO and DG ENV), World Bank, European Investment Bank and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to present their approach, their knowledge of good practices and ideas for innovative and comprehensive disaster risk reduction investments.

The workshop's key conclusions were:

- There are clear benefits in investing in resilience, especially when considering various uncertainties and climate change effects. With solid analytics and well-defined priorities, risk reduction can be very affordable;
- Many examples and opportunities are already available to support countries and cities to reduce their risks;
- More emphasis on funding risk reduction and funding screening processes to include risk screening;
- Importance of cross-sectoral / multi-purpose risk reduction – risk reduction investments can have social, physical and financial benefits (dividends);
- Attention to investing in resilience of critical infrastructure, services and SMEs. There are substantial direct and indirect impacts;
- Scaling up risk reduction means investing in policies, regulations, better planning and design, as well as maintenance, and monitoring of programmes.

#### 4. Mass burns casualties response plan

On 7 January 2020 the Commission issued a Staff Working Document on Preparing for Mass Burn Casualties.<sup>9</sup> EU-level cooperation on burn care is essential, given that it is highly specialised and the national capacity to treat victims is limited in all countries.

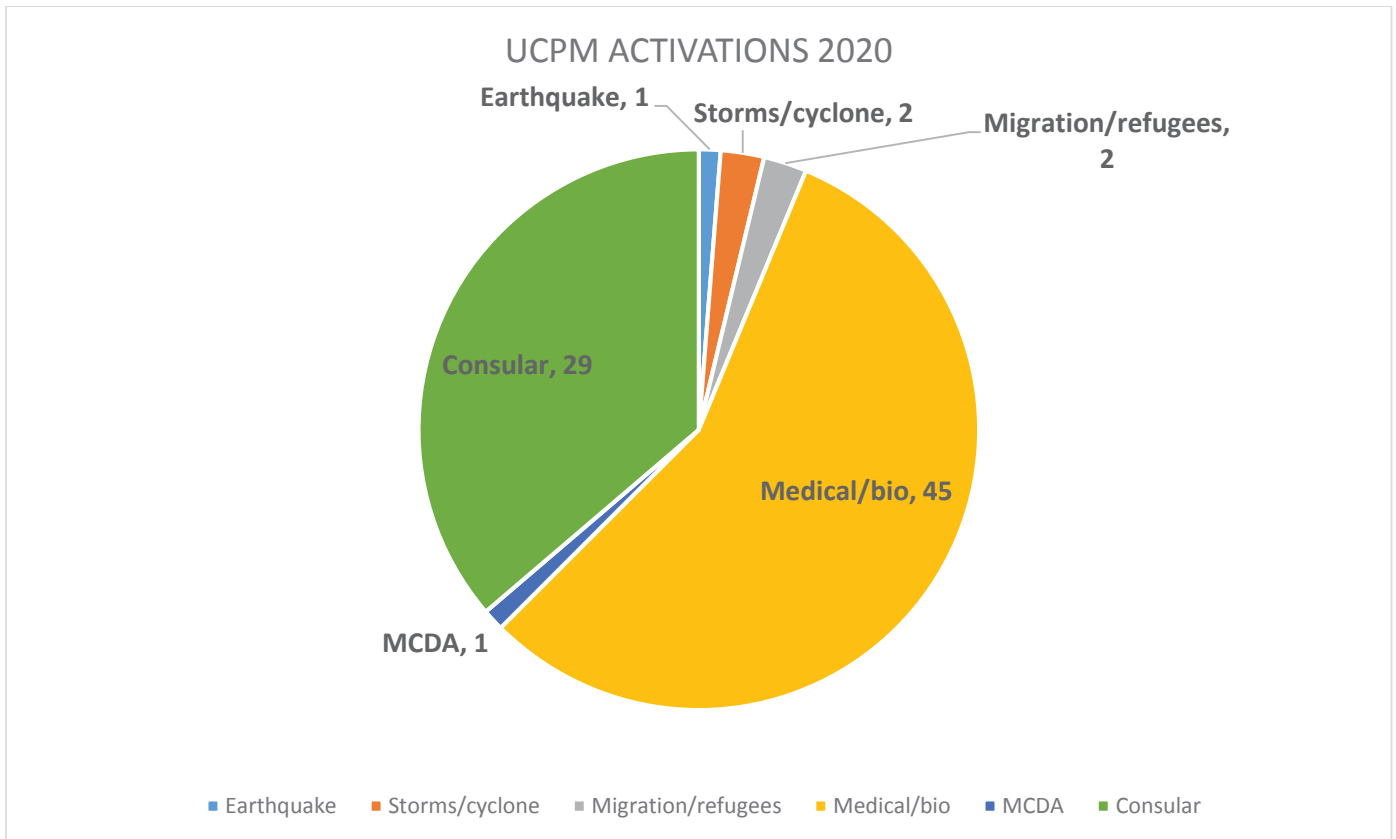
The **EU mass burns response plan** includes burn assessment teams to be deployed through the UCPM for secondary assessment and selection of patients for referral, followed by transportation of patients by medevac to selected burn centres for long-term care. The plan also includes templates for requesting and offering assistance and the terms of reference for burn assessment teams.

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<sup>9</sup> 5088/20.

## 5. Response to emergencies

Since the beginning of January 2020, the UCPM has been activated **80** times, out of which five were not related to COVID-19 (42 requests for assistance inside the EU and 38 outside the EU<sup>10</sup>). In addition, the European Commission's Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated 24 times, producing 187 maps.



<sup>10</sup> Requests received from Participating States and the UK are counted as inside the EU.

**a) COVID-19**

**i) Repatriations of EU citizens stranded in third countries**

According to Article 16(7) of the UCPM Decision, the UCPM may also be used to provide civil protection support to consular assistance to the citizens of the Union in disasters in third countries if requested by the consular authorities of the Member States concerned.

The Union financial assistance for transport does not exceed 75 % of the total eligible transport cost.

Member States have shown solidarity repatriating not only their own nationals, but also other EU citizens. Over 330 repatriation flights organised by 19 Member States, 2 Participating States and the UK have been supported and co-financed through the UCPM, bringing home more than 75.000 EU citizens.<sup>11</sup>

**ii) Requests for in-kind assistance and medical teams**

As of 10 June, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the Commission has received 46 requests for assistance through the UCPM from seven Member States (EL, HR, NL, EE, LT, ES, IT), three Participating States (ME, MK, RS), 35 third countries and an additional request from UN OCHA's Civil Military Coordination Service (CMCS) for Military and/or Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) to transport humanitarian and medical cargo from Liege and Dubai to Accra, Addis Ababa and Johannesburg. Of these requests, 16 have been partially answered (EL, HR, NL, EE, LT, IT, ES, ME, MK, AL, BiH, MD, UA, GE, BY and CN), including through the mobilisation of the rescEU critical medical stockpile (370,000 rescEU FFP2 masks have been delivered to ES, HR, IT, LT, ME, MK).

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<sup>11</sup> This solely includes completed, eligible flights whose passenger list was shared with the ERCC by 10 June.

**b) Other emergencies**

**i) UCPM activations inside the EU**

**Greece – Migration flow**

On 2 March, Greece requested assistance from Member States, the UK and Participating States to prepare for an increased migration flow. The requested items were mainly in the areas of mobility, health, sanitation, shelter and other non-food items.

Seventeen Member and Participating States (AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, HR, LT, NL, NO, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK) offered over 90,000 items to Greece through the UCPM. An ERCC Liaison Officer was deployed to Athens to facilitate the incoming in-kind assistance and liaise with the national authorities. The emergency was closed on 22 March.

**Croatia – Earthquake**

On 22 March, an earthquake 5.4M at depth on 10 km, occurred in Croatia with the epicentre in capital city Zagreb. It affected up to 280,000 people and damaged 27,000 buildings. On the same day, Croatia requested assistance through the UCPM: winter tents, sleeping bags, beds, blankets, lamps, heaters and medical supplies.

Eight Member and Participating States (AT, FR, HU, IT, LT, ME, SK, SI) offered over 3,100 items to Croatia under the UCPM. The requests for winter tents, sleeping bags, beds, blankets, lamps, heaters have been fulfilled by Member and Participating States.

The European Commission's Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated for risk and recovery mapping for a post disaster assessment.

## ii) UCPM activations outside the EU

### **Serbia - Migration flow**

On 24 March, Serbia activated the UCPM on behalf of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. The request consisted of provision of urgent accommodation (tents, folding beds, blankets, mattresses, camp related materials. Three Member States (AT, IE, SI) have provided tents and other shelter items.

### **Vanuatu and Fiji - Tropical Cyclone HAROLD**

Tropical Cyclone HAROLD made landfall over the Pacific Island of Vanuatu on 6 April, with maximum sustained winds up to 215 km/h. In the aftermath of the tropical cyclone, Fiji along with other Pacific countries were also affected. The ERCC received requests for assistance from both Vanuatu and Fiji to which France responded to by offering tents and other non-food items to the affected countries.